

floor. I thank every Member of this House who voted unanimously to pass this legislation in the last Congress.

Finally, I would like to thank Veterans Service Officer Greg Dover from Palm Beach County, Florida, who has helped to alert my office of these schemes and has worked tirelessly on behalf of our veterans to stand up for their rights and the benefits they deserve.

I ask all of my colleagues to support our veterans and to vote “yes” on the Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 506 creates a new section, 1352, in chapter 63, title 18, to penalize fraudsters that knowingly execute or attempt to execute a scheme or artifice to defraud a veteran of his or her benefits—that is a dastardly act—or in connection with obtaining that veteran’s benefits by imposing a fine, imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

Under current law, you can be an agent or attorney and meet certain standards and you can help a veteran. But there are many who were not licensed, not connected, or had the approval of various States or local governments, and they were fraudulently taking precious resources from our veterans. There was no criminal or financial penalty for breaking the law.

So, H.R. 506 provides that penalty because, in recent years, financial predators across the country have targeted easy targets, who are veterans. Many, as we have said, have been physically or mentally maimed in their service to this Nation. Many of them are also elderly and live in low-income housing.

This bill is long in coming. I thank Mr. ROONEY and Mr. DEUTCH, working with the members of the Judiciary Committee, for moving this legislation forward.

We ask our veterans to lay their lives on the line so that we can enjoy freedom, which is at the heart of this great country. We owe them much. Surely, we can repay our gratitude whenever we can. Protecting their veterans’ benefits is one way of expressing our appreciation, and it is the right and just thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation’s veterans have sacrificed. They have given us so much. They have protected us.

In his second inaugural address, President Lincoln reminded us of our solemn duty “to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.”

By doing this today, we keep that promise of so long ago: the promise to give back, as appropriate, and to protect that by giving back to the widows, the orphans, and the veterans them-

selves, because our values don’t just say we write a check. We also protect to make sure that check gets to the true beneficiary. This enforcement will do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to, on a bipartisan basis, which this bill has been from day one, support it and to move it to the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 506, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1207. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 306 River Street in Tilden, Texas, as the “Tilden Veterans Post Office”.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2286. An act to amend the Peace Corps Act to provide greater protection and services for Peace Corps volunteers, and for other purposes.

#### PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3249) to authorize the Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3249

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program Authorization Act of 2017”.

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this Act—

(1) the term “criminal street gangs” has the meaning given such term in section 521 of title 18, United States Code;

(2) the term “gang crime” means a felony or misdemeanor crime, under State or Federal law, committed by one or more persons who are a member of, or directly affiliated with, a criminal street gang;

(3) the term “transnational organized crime group” has the meaning given such term in section 36(k)(6) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2708(k)(6));

(4) the term “transnational organized crime” has the meaning given such term in

section 36(k)(5) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2708(k)(5)); and

(5) the term “firearms offenses” means an offense under section 922 or 924 of title 18, United States Code.

#### SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.

The Attorney General of the United States is authorized to establish and carry out a program, to be known as the “Project Safe Neighborhoods Block Grant Program” or, in this Act, as the “Program”, within the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice.

#### SEC. 4. PURPOSE.

The purpose of the Project Safe Neighborhoods Block Grant Program is to foster and improve existing partnerships between Federal, State, and local agencies, including the United States Attorney in each Federal judicial district, to create safer neighborhoods through sustained reductions in violent crimes by—

(1) developing and executing strategic plans to assist law enforcement agencies in combating gang crimes, including the enforcement of gun laws and drug interdiction; and

(2) developing intervention and prevention initiatives, including juvenile justice projects and activities which may include street-level outreach, conflict mediation, and the changing of community norms, in order to reduce violence.

#### SEC. 5. RULES AND REGULATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall, not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, make rules to create, carry out, and administer the Program in accordance with this section.

(b) FUNDS TO BE DIRECTED TO LOCAL CONTROL.—Amounts made available as grants under the Program shall be, to the greatest extent practicable, locally controlled to address problems that are identified locally

(c) REGIONAL GANG TASK FORCES.—30 percent of the amounts made available as grants under the Program each fiscal year shall be granted to established Regional Gang Task Forces in regions experiencing a significant or increased presence of, or high levels of activity from, transnational organized crime groups posing threats to community safety in terms of violent crime, firearms offenses, human trafficking, trafficking and distribution of illegal opioids and heroin, and other crimes.

#### SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; CONSOLIDATION OF PROGRAMS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for the Program under this Act \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2021.

(b) CONSOLIDATION OF PROGRAMS.—For each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, no funds are authorized to be separately appropriated to the Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs for—

(1) competitive and evidence-based programs to reduce gun crime and gang violence;

(2) an Edward Byrne Memorial criminal justice innovation program;

(3) community-based violence prevention initiatives; or

(4) gang and youth violence education, prevention and intervention, and related activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.